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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

Protection of Palestinian students and educational institutions and safeguarding of the security of the facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the occupied Palestinian territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 48/40 J of 10 December 1993, the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

> "The General Assembly,
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> "...
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> "1. Condemns the repeated Israeli raids on the premises and installations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from such raids;
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> "2. Deplores the policy and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which have led to the prolonged closure of educational and vocational institutions, a large number of which are operated by the Agency, and the repeated disruption of medical services;
>
> "3. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 27 July 1994, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in which he drew attention to his reporting responsibility under the resolution and requested the

Permanent Representative to inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. In a note verbale dated 27 July 1994, the Permanent Representative of Israel replied as follows:

> "Israel's position on these resolutions has been set forth in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years, the latest of which being Israel's note verbale dated 15 June 1993. In addition, Israel's representative to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee reiterated Israel's position in his statement dated 8 December 1993 in which he said, inter alia, 'The series of resolutions on UNRWA ignores the new political reality following the agreement between Israel and the PLO, as well as the bilateral and multilateral negotiations.' Accordingly, Israel abstained on resolutions 48/40 A and D, and voted against resolutions 48/40 E to J.
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> "It should be noted that, in the past year, major progress has been achieved in the framework of the peace process, including the Declaration of Principles signed in Washington, D.C. on 13 September 1993 by Israel and the PLO, and the subsequent Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, signed in Cairo on 4 May 1994. Israel believes that UNRWA can play an important role in promoting the social and economic advancement foreseen in the agreements between Israel and the PLO, and accordingly looks forward to continuing the cooperation and good working relationship with UNRWA.
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> "In the light of the above, Israel considers it essential, now more than ever, that the General Assembly focus its resolutions regarding UNRWA on the issues directly related to the agency's humanitarian tasks and that it refrain from adopting resolutions related to political issues irrelevant to the work for which UNRWA is responsible, and detached from the new reality.
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> "To this end, it would be advisable to consolidate the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly regarding UNRWA into one resolution. This would also be compatible with the necessity to rationalize the work of the General Assembly."

4. The following information concerning Israel's compliance with General Assembly resolution 48/40 J is based on reports from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It covers the period from 1 July 1993 to 30 June 1994 and relates exclusively to UNRWA educational institutions and other facilities. Further information is contained in the annual report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA 1/ for the above-mentioned period.

5. During the period under review, there were 63 cases of unauthorized entry into UNRWA premises in the West Bank by the Israeli authorities. Of these, 45 related to schools and 4 to health centres. In the Gaza Strip there were 113 such cases, of which 56 related to schools and 32 to health centres. UNRWA has taken up these cases with the Israeli authorities who, in a number of instances,

claimed that UNRWA premises were entered because stones had been thrown from within, or stone-throwers were being chased into the premises.

6. During the same period, there were 63 cases of injury, though no fatalities, among students and trainees at UNRWA educational institutions in the West Bank. The corresponding figures for the Gaza Strip were 1,375 injuries and no fatalities. These casualties were attributable to beatings, tear-gas inhalation, rubber bullets and live ammunition. In addition, a total of 44 students and trainees in the West Bank and 25 in the Gaza Strip were detained, of whom 21 in the West Bank and 19 in the Gaza Strip were released by 30 June 1994.

7. The three UNRWA training centres in the West Bank completed the 1992/93 academic year in August 1993. The 1993/94 academic year began at all three training centres in the course of October 1993 and ended in July 1994. An average of 24 per cent of academic time was lost owing to general strikes, curfews and closures of the occupied territory. Following the massacre at al-Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron on 25 February 1994, the occupied territory was sealed off from Israel and East Jerusalem, and trainees coming from the Gaza Strip and from the southern West Bank were unable to attend the Ramallah Men's Training Centre and the Kalandia Training Centre from 1 March 1994 until 27 May 1994. Out of concern for educational pursuit and the demands of the students who were not allowed to leave Gaza, the Agency requested and obtained permits from the Israeli authorities for students from Gaza attending UNRWA training centres in the West Bank. However, of a total of 333 students from the Gaza Strip attending Ramallah and Kalandia Training Centres, 51 students did not receive permits to study in the West Bank. A special schedule was arranged for Gaza students at the UNRWA training centres in the West Bank to enable them to complete their course requirements. The Gaza Training Centre lost 10 per cent of days as a result of military closure orders and 26 per cent of days owing to general strikes and curfews.

8. In the West Bank, a total of 9 per cent of school time was lost between September 1993 and June 1994, owing primarily to military closures, general strikes and curfews. In the Gaza Strip, the corresponding amount of school time lost was 10 per cent. Alternative places of education were used for teaching classes from schools which were closed by military order.

9. During the reporting period, the Agency provided students in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with distance education and self-learning materials, but such measures can provide only partial compensation for lost classroom time. Preliminary analysis of achievement tests that UNRWA administered to students at the beginning of the 1993/94 academic year in a wide variety of subjects disclosed detrimental effects on the educational performance of students. Remedial measures were undertaken during the 1993/94 academic year to overcome those effects.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/49/13), paras. 122-125 and 134-138.